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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 HARARE 000372

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AF/S FOR B. NEULING  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE  
AFR/SA FOR E. LOKEN  
COMMERCE FOR BECKY ERKUL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2011

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MOYO ON POLITICAL LANDSCAPE, AVENUES FOR CHANGE

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher Dell under Section 1.4 b/d

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Summary  
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[11](#). (C) Independent MP Jonathan Moyo told poloff March 22 that the growing proximity of Mugabe's departure and economic collapse were increasing a national impetus for political change. In this uncertain environment, securocrats were the only ones focusing on policy and stability, and they were losing confidence in the capacity of Vice President Mujuru's capacity to hold the party together after Mugabe's departure.

Moyo expressed disappointment with the timidity of Emmerson Mnangagwa and his camp, who he said were inclined to posture and hedge until a succession event was close. To hasten ruling party fractures and improve Zimbabwe's dysfunctional political environment, according to Moyo, the MDC factions, civil society and Mnangagwa's camp should agitate for harmonized presidential and parliamentary elections in 2008, an effort he urged the West to support. End summary.

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Lame Duck Presidency, Economy Propel Change  
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[12](#). (C) On the porch of his relatively modest Borrowdale West suburban home, Moyo acknowledged he had been out of the limelight for months but said he was enagaging with players from all political groups constantly. He assessed that the country's political horizon remained clouded but that the next few months would see significant developments. Two factors -- Mugabe's lame duck status and the economy -- assured that a course for change would be set by year's end.

[13](#). (C) The controversial ex-Information Minister and former

Mugabe confidant maintained that ZANU-PF was incapable of reforming itself in the foreseeable future. Even if the patronage pie were contracting, the threat of losing one's job and outside business interests for "straying" remained decisive for all in the absence of credible alternatives. Although most recognized the need for international assistance and wanted better relations with the West, there was absolutely no consideration underway of reforms necessary to secure international assistance. Succession dynamics meant that nobody would take on Mugabe over policy. On the economic front, the cabinet lacked the human resources to even understand, much less debate policy alternatives, even if Mugabe were not an obstacle.

14. (C) Moyo said both ruling party factions recognized that the economy could not weather the political status quo much longer and wanted Mugabe to step down. Moyo said Mugabe stood no chance of winning another election were he to run. The Mujuru faction banked on having Vice President Mujuru succeed Mugabe in 2008, giving the party time to turn around the economy sufficiently to win an election in a presidential election postponed until 2010 by constitutional amendment. This assumed that the international community would re-engage with Zimbabwe upon Mugabe's stepping down.

15. (C) Mujuru did not command sufficient support to assume the presidency, according to Moyo. Only four of ten provincial party structures supported her. Moreover, any plan to delay a presidential election until 2010 would provoke a backlash from the public, particularly among the most numerous Karanga ethnic group. Mujuru's effort to rally Karanga behind the clique's "man in Masvingo", Obert Mpofu, was doomed. (N.B. He did not mention other more popular

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Mujuru allies in Masvingo, such as Eddie Zvobgo, Jr., and Dzikamayi Mavhaire.) If the Mujuru faction agreed to a national election in 2008, Mnangagwa's group would either prevail over her in an intra-party ZANU-PF race or bolt the party.

16. (C) As for Mnangagwa's faction, Moyo lamented their continued low profile and unwillingness to break with or even challenge the ZANU-PF Old Guard so far. The stakes of patronage and succession made them hang on to their moribund party even though they were emotionally ready to leave. Their strategy was consciously geared to a "sprint" while Moyo had embarked on a "marathon." He explained that few could afford economically or politically to break from the party for more than a couple of months. Given ZANU-PF's unchallenged authority, they would wait until within months of an election event to break from the party - if they assessed that a new entity would overwhelm ZANU-PF's remnants. Moyo opined, however, that delay until too late by Mnangagwa himself could cost him politically as a sign of leadership failure.

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Mnangagwa Preserving Options  
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17. (C) Moyo said that the Mnangagwa faction was further constrained by Mnangagwa's continued strong personal loyalty to Mugabe. He assessed that Mnangagwa did not intend to overtly or implicitly challenge Mugabe as long as Mugabe remained in office, and that Mnangagwa believed that Mugabe could yet confer the presidency to him. The former heir apparent continued to have the President's ear. Moreover, Mugabe wanted to keep Mnangagwa in the game, as evidenced by his personal intervention to keep Mnangagwa from being arrested on at least one occasion. In the same vein, Moyo reported that Mugabe had approached Mnangagwa at the December party conference to amend the party's recent constitutional requirement that a woman be included in the top three positions, a provision that had triggered Mujuru's supplanting Mnangagwa as that heir apparent. Mnangagwa

declined because it would be too overtly self-serving, and Mugabe agreed to have the amendment of the amendment advanced later by the politburo.

¶8. (C) Moyo further corroborated another Mnangagwa anecdote floating around Harare of late. A few months ago, Moyo reported, Vice President Msika advised Mnangagwa that Mugabe and Msika were preparing to step down; Mnangagwa responded that he would step down too. Stressing his loyalty to Mugabe, Mnangagwa told Msika his continued presence would be a distraction to any successor and a disruption to party unity. Msika countered that Mnangagwa's prospects to succeed Mugabe were good and convinced him to remain.

¶9. (C) Moyo said he was increasingly doubtful about Mnangagwa's prospects. Mnangagwa's association with the Tsholotsho affair, the Col Dyck affair, the 1980s

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Gukurahundi massacres in Matabeleland, and ruling party financial skullduggery all gave Mugabe or Mujuru tools with which to undermine Mnangagwa privately and publicly. Moreover, despite his reputation for ruthlessness, Mnangagwa was proving too confrontation-averse and vacillating in internecine combat with the Mujuru faction. Nonetheless, Mugabe was a bigger liability to Mujuru than to Mnangagwa, with Mnangagwa benefiting from public attribution of economic collapse to the political status quo.

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#### Securocrats Pivotal, Uncertain

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¶10. (C) Moyo emphasized the pivotal importance of the security forces' joint operations command (JOC) in the succession game. The JOC were the only ones in power to identify policy alternatives and weigh their consequences. Nonetheless, they could not get sufficient purchase on policy issues with political players given the centrality of succession politics. Moyo suggested that the senior securocrats had originally blessed the Mujuru succession plan but were now doubting her ability to hold things together. Moyo maintained that the securocrats - together with the black middle class - viewed Mnangagwa as more capable than Mujuru in turning the economy around and in relating to the West. The JOC's assessment and intentions was likely evolving but would have to come to a head soon given their concerns about the unsustainability of the economic crisis.

#### ----- Opposition Needs Reorientation

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¶11. (C) Moyo said that each ZANU-PF faction continued to court elements of each of the inwardly absorbed MDC factions. The security apparatus had driven and exploited the MDC rift, and hoped eventually to draw elements of the "Welshman faction" (N.B. perhaps tellingly, Moyo never referred to it as the Mutambara faction) into the government to better market the GOZ to the international community.

¶12. (C) Moyo asserted that the rift nonetheless opened opportunities for the opposition, which could now redefine itself and reorient itself strategically. The country was more ready for change than it was in 2002; the opposition needed to catch up with the people in identifying and demanding solutions to the national crisis. Most importantly, the factions needed to collaborate on tactics, and join together more definitively with business, labor, local NGOs, the separate white and black dominated farmers unions, churches, and disaffected elements of ZANU-PF to fuel an atmosphere that impelled constructive change.

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¶13. (C) Moyo maintained that the timing of the next presidential election was a flashpoint for the ruling party's factional strife. A vast majority of Zimbabweans, including within the ruling party, wanted change and saw a 2008 harmonized election as a key. Thus, the issue that was splitting the ruling party apart could force disparate players to join together to enhance the atmospherics and build momentum for change. Public outcry could overcome ZANU-PF Old Guard intransigence on the issue. Moreover, deliberation over the constitutional amendment to authorize a harmonized election would "open a Pandora's Box" of potential political reforms to remedy much of Zimbabwe's dysfunctional political environment. Moyo said the issue nonetheless lacked any forceful or organizing advocate and urged the West to work quietly with its civil society partners, with churches perhaps coordinating public efforts, to advance it.

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Comment  
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¶14. (C) Even putting aside the galling irony of courting support from a USG he vilified for years as Information Minister, Moyo's comments need to be filtered for personal ambition and his continuing (albeit perhaps weakening) alignment with Mnangagwa. His ellipses and contradictions reflect difficulties he has playing a weak political hand in a shifting and uncertain succession game. In that vein, for example, he never mentioned his United People's Movement, a not-so-covertly Mnangagwa-aligned vehicle that has had problems getting purchase with civil society and the public at large. Although Moyo may have burned too many bridges to be an overtly influential player with any of the major political groupings in the foreseeable future, he remains a pot-stirrer and keen observer of the political landscape able to proffer telling insights into the internal workings of ZANU-PF.  
DELL